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## NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

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### GALBA'S ASSASSINATION AND THE INDIFFERENT CITIZEN

In the fortieth chapter of the first book of the *Histories* Tacitus portrays the attitude of the throngs about the forum who were witnesses of the tragedy of the assassination of Galba. He brings the description to an end with these words: "non tumultus, non quies, quale magni metus et magnae irae silentium est." Heraeus and Wolff assume an ellipsis which can be filled out by prefixing to the last clause *sed tale silentium*, and Wolff then translates: "Sondern ein Schweigen, welches . . . verrät (von . . . herrührt)." This idea is adopted by Moore, who writes: "i. e., *tale silentium, quale*." The sentence must then be translated: "There was no commotion, there was not ordinary quiet, there was that silence which is characteristic of great fear and great passion." Other editors, e. g., Valmaggi, supply simply *sed*, translating presumably as Spooner does (*Introduction*, p. 12): "There was neither tumult nor peace but the silence of a great fear, a great anger." Church and Brodribb eliminate the comparison in the same manner as Spooner does, and translate: "But there reigned the silence of profound alarm and profound indignation." Quill renders: "But the silence of pregnant terror and indignation." With the same understanding, Merivale writes (*The Romans under the Empire*, VII, 72): "Alarmed and indignant, they awaited the event in silence."

Such is the traditional interpretation of the passage by the commentators. However the ellipsis is filled out, the rendering by various scholars involves the same meaning for the clause. This interpretation is very old; it is given by Rousseau in these words: "Il ne régnoit ni tranquillité ni tumulte, mais un silence qui marquoit à la fois la frayeur et l'indignation." It was adopted also by Burnouf, who suggested that Tacitus had in mind the following passage in the *Agésilas* of Xenophon (2. 12): καὶ κραυγὴ μὲν οὐδεμία παρῆν, οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ σιγὴ, φωνὴ δέ τις ἦν τωαῦτῃ οἷαν ὀργὴ τε καὶ μάχη παράσχοιτ' αὖν. The parallel was cited with approval by Orelli, and from him has come into modern editions.

The situation assumed by editors is this: the emperor had come down from the Palatium to try to quell the disturbance in the city; the revolt of Otho was making considerable progress; the people, under extreme emotion, were watching to see what would happen; they feared for their personal safety, and they were swayed by intense indignation against the misrule of Galba. But it may be seriously questioned whether they labored under the influence of such extreme fear, or such great passion. Certainly the

narrative of Tacitus does not imply this, nor do the accounts of the day by other writers.

Only occasionally has exception been taken to the commonly accepted translation of the passage. Davies, in his edition of book I, argues against it, but his argument is not quite convincing. His own explanation, however, seems to me absolutely correct. The last sentence of his note reads: "On the whole it seems better to consider that *quale*, etc., explains *quies*." I would therefore suggest the following translation: "There was not commotion, nor yet the quiet, such as is the silence of extreme fear and extreme passion." The same interpretation was given by Dureau de Lamalle: "Dans un état ni tumultueux, ni calme, tel qu'est ce silence des grandes colères et des grandes terreurs." Henderson (*Civil War and Rebellion in the Roman Empire*, p. 15) evidently understands the sentence in this way, for he says: "Galba and Piso, lured down to the forum from the height of the Palatine, were abandoned by an indifferent mob and treacherous soldiers to their fate."

Tacitus had just said that the people stood watching, without saying a word, "neque populi aut plebis ulla vox," they were amazed at the sudden upheaval in the state. Certainly they were immensely interested in the progress of the revolution, but there is nothing to show that they were profoundly moved. One is inevitably reminded of the utter indifference of the people to the welfare of the state, as shown by their attitude a few months later in the struggle between the Vitellians and the Flavians: "Aderat pugnantibus spectator populus, utque in ludicro certamine, hos, rursus illos clamore et plausu fovebat" (*Hist.* 3. 83). It is true that the sentence under discussion is strikingly like the one in the *Agésilas*, but it bears a still closer resemblance to one in the first book of Livy, which does not seem to have been cited as a parallel. Livy describes the entrance of the Roman legions into Alba Longa, where they found no commotion or panic, such as is characteristic of captured cities: "quae [i. e., legiones] ubi intravere portas, non quidem fuit tumultus ille nec pavor, qualis captarum esse urbium solet" (1. 29. 2). Weissenborn cites a sentence of Justin (8. 5. 9) which is clearly imitated from that of Livy: "Non quidem pavor ille hostilis nec discursus per urbem militum erat, non tumultus armorum, non bonorum atque hominum rapina, sed tacitus maeror et luctus, verentibus, ne ipsae lacrimae pro contumacia haberentur." There can be no question about Justin's imitation of the sentence of Livy, but a fact worthy of notice is that the second part of the sentence is introduced by the adversative *sed*, while both Livy and Tacitus introduce the second part of their sentences by the comparative *qualis*. In addition to the remarkable verbal resemblance between the sentence of Tacitus and that of Livy, there is the very important resemblance in content. They both terminate with a general characterization, quite in harmony with a recognized feature of the style of Tacitus. This is quite lost in the traditional translation of the passage.

Next, as to the facts in the case. Tacitus several times makes the explicit statement that the people of Rome had lost interest in public affairs. For example, he thinks it is a great compliment to Agricola that the people took any notice of his illness, for they were ordinarily quite unconcerned about great men or great happenings in the empire: "Hic aliud agens populus" (*Agr.* 43). The same criticism occurs four times elsewhere: "incuriosa suorum aetas" (*Agr.* 1: it is immaterial in this connection whether *suorum* is masculine or neuter); "magnitudine nimia communium curarum expers populus" (*Hist.* 1. 89); "vulgus tamen vacuum curis" (*Hist.* 2. 90); "dum vetera extollimus, recentium incuriosi" (*Ann.* 2. 88). The same charge is made even against the historians of the empire, for little good history is found, and the explanation is "inscitia rei publicae ut alienae" (*Hist.* 1. 1). Only the thoughtful men, who kept in the background, were deeply interested in the welfare of the state: "sapientibus quietis et rei publicae cura" (*Hist.* 1. 88).

An examination of the records of the reign of Galba discloses the fact that ancient writers believed that Galba was unpopular, but that there was not intense feeling against him, even on the day of his murder. Suetonius makes but one comment on the attitude of the citizens as the end of Galba's reign drew near: "per haec prope universis ordinibus offensus vel praecipua flagrabat invidia apud milites" (*Galba* 16). And speaking of the day of the murder he says: "illud mirum admodum fuerit, neque praesentium quemquam opem imperatori ferre conatum et omnes qui arcesserentur sprevisse nuntium excepta Germanici[an]orum vexillatione" (*Galba* 20). This means, the attitude of the people toward Galba was such that it is surprising that none aided him on that day. The strongest evidence, outside of Tacitus, that the citizens were not profoundly moved at the time of the murder occurs in the story of Plutarch: τῶν μὲν οὖν πολλῶν δρόμος ἦν, οὐ φυγῇ σκιδναμένων, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὰς στοὰς καὶ τὰ μετέωρα τῆς ἀγορᾶς ὥσπερ θέαν καταλαμβάνόντων (*Galba* 26). And the last sentence of his life of Galba reads: οὐδένα ποθοῦντα τὴν ἀρχὴν, οἰκτείραντας δὲ τοὺς πολλοὺς τὸν θάνατον ἀπέλειπεν (*Galba* 29). This indicates clearly that, according to the sources of Plutarch, the hostility to Galba was not intense.

The account by Dio Cassius, in the abridgment of Xiphilinus, squares with those of Suetonius and Plutarch. The reputation of Galba was not good: ὥστ' εἰ καὶ ἔξω τοῦ τι δεῖνόν ποιεῖν ὁ Γάλβας ἦν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐκείνοις ἀδικεῖν ἐπέτρεπεν, ἥ ὅτι ἡγνόει τὰ γινόμενα, οὐ καλῶς ἤκουε (*Dio* 64. 2). But even the soldiers at the time of the murder of Galba had no very bitter feelings, for it was necessary to bribe them in order to gain their support for Otho: καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, αἵ τε καὶ ἀχθομένους τῷ Γάλβῳ, προσαναπέσας, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐκπριάμενος, παρὰ τε ἐκείνων τὴν ἀρχὴν παραχρῆμα ἔλαβε, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων (*Dio* 64. 5). The history of Zonaras (11. 14) repeats the statement of Xiphilinus, or Dio, almost verbatim.

Turning again to Tacitus, we find that, in general, there was ill-will against Galba, but it was almost wholly due to the self-seeking of individuals,

and to the fear that Galba would not further their selfish interests. Thus: "*plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sueta, simul deterrimi servorum, aut qui adesis bonis per dedecus Neronis alebantur, maesti et rumorum avidi*" (1. 4). That the feeling was not intense is shown by the fact that after the adoption of Piso the friendship of even the soldiers might easily have been won: "*tribuni tamen centurionesque et proximi militum grata auditu respondent: per ceteros maestitia ac silentium, tamquam usurpatam etiam in pace donativi necessitatem bello perdidissent. Constat potuisse conciliari animos quantulacumque parci senis liberalitate*" (1. 18). Piso addressed the senate, and the same selfish motive was observable: "*Pisonis comis oratio. Et patrum favor aderat: multi voluntate, effusius qui noluerant, medii ac plurimi obvio obsequio, privatas spes agitantes sine publica cura*" (1. 19). The lack of sincerity on the part of senators when they met Otho immediately after his accession is pictured strongly: "*Alium crederes senatum, alium populum: ruere cuncti in castra, anteire proximos, certare cum praecurrentibus, increpare Galbam, laudare militum iudicium, exosculari Othonis manum; quantoque magis falsa erant quae fiebant, tanto plura facere*" (1. 45). Not only was the senate insincere, but the people had no affection for either Galba or Otho. When it first became known that Otho had revolted, the people, believing that the uprising would soon be suppressed, turned to Galba, insincerely, to assure him of their loyalty, without doubt hoping to receive favors in return for their expressions: "*universa iam plebs Palatium implebat, mixtis servitiis et dissono clamore caedem Othonis et coniuratorum exitium poscentium, ut si in circo aut theatro ludicrum aliquod postularent: neque illis iudicium aut veritas, quippe eodem die diversa pari certamine postulaturis*" (1. 32). Next came the rumor that Otho had been slain, and all gave way to extravagant shouts of joy: "*tum vero non populus tantum et imperita plebs in plausus et inmodica studia, sed equitum plerique ac senatorum, posito metu incauti*" (1. 35). They were always ready to shout for the present emperor, however insincerely. Thus, when Otho was about to take the field against Vitellius, Tacitus says: "*clamor vocesque vulgi ex more adulandi nimiae et falsae*" (1. 90).

The several petty disturbances in the state, which had been crushed savagely by Galba, gave occasion for much dissatisfaction, but the citizens had no special fondness for any one of the prominent possible claimants to the throne: "*ingens novis rebus materia, ut non in unum aliquem prono favore, ita audenti parata*" (1. 6). And yet the feeling against Galba kept increasing: "*et invisio semel principi seu bene seu male facta invidiam adferebant*" (1. 7). But when the actual outbreak occurred, there were not many implicated in the plot, and no large number greatly preferred Otho: "*totidem ferme milites in itinere adgregantur, alii conscientia, plerique miraculo, pars clamore et gaudiis, pars silentio, animum ex eventu sumpturi*" (1. 27). The smallness of the number who were seriously engaged in the

revolt is again mentioned by Tacitus: "isque habitus animorum fuit, ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur" (1. 28). And even these were not moved by feelings of patriotism, for the abortive attempt of the preceding day to place Otho on the throne did not fail out of regard for the welfare of the state, about which they cared little: "non rei publicae cura, quam foedare principis sui sanguine sobrii parabant" (1. 26).

When, therefore, Galba was being tossed about by the crowds in the forum, the people in huge throngs took up positions in the basilicas and temples, from which they could see all that happened. It was a grand and exciting spectacle. They watched intently; they did not talk; they turned in every direction to distinguish the various sounds; there was no commotion, there was not that intense silence characteristic of deep feeling; they were anxious to ascertain what the insurrection meant, how successful it would be, and what result they could expect to themselves personally. It was hardly to be expected that they would arm themselves to assist either side, but it was reported to Otho that they were being armed. It is significant that Otho did not know where the sympathy of the people lay. He took measures, therefore, to prevent serious opposition to himself: "ire praecipites et occupare pericula iubet" (1. 40). The carelessness, or lukewarmness, of the people scarcely justified the report that they were taking arms, and yet (*tamen*) such was the report.

The only serious objection to the interpretation offered is that the structural balance of the sentence is destroyed. The three words *tumultus*, *quies*, *silentium* make a fine climax, whereas the translation I have advocated makes two short phrases parallel, namely, *non tumultus* and *non quies*, but then adds a long phrase explanatory of *quies*. That is true, but Tacitus would not be guilty of saying a thing, for the sake of a climax, which contradicts all his beliefs, expressed so many times, and in the vicinity of this chapter.

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#### EMENDATION OF PLATO *Gorgias* 503D

εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐν τῷ ὑστέρω λόγῳ ἡναγκάσθημεν ἡμεῖς ὁμολογεῖν — ὅτι αἱ μὲν τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν πληρούμεναι βελτίῳ ποιοῦσι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ταύτας μὲν ἀποτελεῖν, αἱ δὲ χείρῳ, μὴ, τοῦτο δὲ τέχνη τις εἶη, etc.

The concluding phrase has given editors some uneasiness. Nestle follows Burnet in reading *εἶναι* for the manuscript *εἶη*, and *τέχνης εἶναι* (Ast) and *τέχνης τινὸς δέεται* have been proposed. The simple reading to which I think Platonic usage and thought point is *τούτου*. Plato had said above (500A) that the selection or discrimination here described is the business of an artist, *τεχνικοῦ*. And now he repeats the thought in the form that there is an art of it.